DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 047 043 UD 011 181

AUTHOR Eash, Maurice J.
TITLE A Curriculum Evaluation of an Academy for Black Drop Outs: The Alternatives in an Alternative School.
PUB DATE Feb 71
NOTE 34p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, N.Y., February 1971

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC Not Available from EDPS.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Development, *Curriculum Evaluation, Dropout Programs, Dropouts, *Dropout Teaching, High Schools, *High School Students, Inner City, Instructional Design, *Negroes, School Size, Urban Schools, *Urban Teaching
IDENTIFIERS Christian Action Ministry Academy, Illinois

ABSTRACT

This paper reports the results of a comprehensive curriculum evaluation of an academy founded to assist black drop-outs. Designed to determine the effects of the educational program on the student body and to lay bare the major constructs in the instructional and curriculum designs, the study employed a modified Shufflebeam curriculum evaluation model. Eleven major data sources were utilized which allowed comparisons to be made with data on comparable public school populations, as well as within the group comparisons. The findings raise questions about current emphasis on size of schools and instructional and curriculum designs of present inner-city educational programs. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of the original document.] (Author/JM)

ED047043

Abstract

A CURRICULUM EVALUATION OF AN ACADEMY FOR BLACK DROP-OUTS

The Alternatives in an Alternative School

This paper reports the results of a comprehensive curriculum evaluation of an academy founded to assist black drop-outs. Designed to determine the effects of the educational program on the student body and to lay bare the major constructs in the instructional and curriculum designs, the study employed a modified Stufflebeam curriculum evaluation model. Eleven major data sources were utilized which allowed comparisons to be made with data on comparable public school populations as well as within the group comparisons. The findings raise questions about current emphases on size of schools and instructional and curriculum designs of present inner-city educational programs.

Submitted by Maurice J. Eash
University of Illinois at
Chicago Circle

ED047043

A CURRICULUM EVALUATION OF AN ACADEMY FOR BLACK DROP OUTS:

THE ALTERNATIVES IN AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

UD011181

Maurice J. Eash
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle

American Educational Research Association, February, 1971

The educational processes as traditionally practiced are badly out of joint for large city high schools. While we may point with pride to our accomplishments in public education, the inner city high school and its products are not usually included in this survey of achievements. Rather these problem schools have long been ignored in the emphasis on findings and exploiting scientific and other academic talents, until a situation exists in which it is questionable whether any semblance of education is available in these schools to even the most highly motivated of students. Overcrowding, social disorganization, overwhelmed staff, and endemic hopelessness, the four horsemen of the educational apocalypse now reign in many of the inner city high schools. In a recent report it is estimated that the large city high school is unsuccessful with 25-30% of its 16 to 17 year olds.[1] While the basis for this judgement is unclear, it would seem from other evidence that this estimate is far too low. Other data indicate that for some subgroups, particularly minority group males, for whom the criterion for success is remaining in high school until graduation, the number who are unsuccessful in inner city schools runs as high as 80-85%.

Faced with these disheartening data, the plans for resusitating inner city education for large numbers of secondary youth appear to be superficial and unimaginative. In a recent report, "The Profile of the Large City High School" issued by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, a series of new curriculum practices under consideration for adoption or in use in large city high schools were listed. The six most frequently cited new curriculum practices were: inservice program, expanded guidance services, language laboratories, expanded summer programs, tutoring programs, and instructional materials centers.

At best these appear to be piecemeal curriculum tinkerings and an application of arm-chaired nostroms, as opposed to any consideration of a basic reconstruction of the educational enterprise. What is notable in this list of 32 "new" curriculum practices is that few underlying assumptions are challenged, and the six most frequently cited are simply continuations of present practices through a more intensive application or through extensions of time and/or employment of additional staff. However, there are alternate models of education being tried in the inner city. Usually these are to be found in privately sponsored schools, frequently called academies, that spring up in the attempt to work with students who have been largely unsuccessful in the public schools. Unfortunately, these alternate schools have arisen phoenix-like, blazed accross the educational headlines, and expired before an evaluation design or an objective observer could describe their functioning. Evaluation of these alternative schools has been handicapped not only by their short life span, but also by their stance which discourages examination by traditional researchers.

An opportunity to examine closely an alternative school was presented to the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle in the spring of 1970. An alternative school for black dropouts which had been in operation for three years approached the Office of Evaluation Research and requested a comprehensive curriculum evaluation of their academy. They agreed to accept the usual ground rules that a thorough review would be conducted, using a broad range of evidence, and the final report would reflect impartially the results, good, bad, or indifferent. It was the conviction of the school's administrators that an alternative school if consistent

in its philosophy, should be open to new routes and procedures which could be derived from rigorous evaluation of present practice. Since the academy was in the inner city and serving a segment of youth which investigations document as being unsuccessful in present secondary schools, the evaluation was deemed by the University to offer an opportunity to discover the practices that prevail in an alternative school and to learn why they are attractive to students. This paper, then, is a summary of an extended evaluation research report on the Christian Action Ministry Academy, a self described second-chance school for black high school dropouts.[2]

The School and its Social Context

The Christian Action Ministry Academy, hereafter referred to as CAM Academy, was started by the Christian Action Ministry, a consortium of fourteen churches located in the black ghetto that lies on the West side of Chicago. This alliance of churches, founded in the aftermath of devastating riots that racked the local area following the assination of Martin Luther King Jr., has formulated and implemented a series of social programs directed toward the improvement of the spiritual, cultural, and economic life of the community. Education was accorded a primary place in their programs, for bitter personal experience had engraved on CAM's founding membership the knowledge of the dire social effects on a community of large numbers of unemployed, inadequately educated youth with little or no future. A tutoring program was initiated, but it had little appeal and was soon written off as inadequate. But from this venture the educational planners in CAM became committed to search for a curriculum model that would deviate sharply from the local public school, appeal

to the alienated youth, and effectively educate them in academic skills. A design for an alternative school was drawn and with a shaky financial base but a firm commitment to project a different and hopefully more appealing program, the Academy opened its doors to enrollment in 1967. The first classes were held in a church, but shortly afterwards the school moved to a vacant bank building that CAM had purchased to house the Academy and other social programs.

An important determinant of the Academy and its curriculum is the surrounding community. The building housing the Academy is located on a busy street within a small business district containing a variety of retail stores. On the adjoining side streets are the usual carry-out food shops, dry cleaning, small grocery shops, laundry, beer joints, and record stores. Within this area and scattered among the small businesses are vacant stores, a number of which are burned out, visible evidence of the fires that swept this area three years ago. Many of these burned out shops have not been cleared or boarded up, and are areas where children play and garbage accumulates. There are few new businesses moving into the area other than an occasional small shopkeeper.

West Garfield Park, the location of CAM Academy, has been in transition for the past decade, but is now a solid black neighborhood. Moving into the area are blacks predominately from other sections of the city and a limited number of newer immigrants from the South. Transiency is high, but probably lower than in other black areas of the city where the housing is in a greater state of deterioration. The level of transciency is directly reflected in the CAM students' reports on the number of times they have changed schools outside of the normal changes mandated by grade

progression. CAM students averaged just a little less than four switches, while the nationside Project Talent sample averaged between 0-1 school changes.[3]

Housing is mixed, with some streets being lined with a few quality apartment buildings now deteriorating, others with rows of small shabby walkups, and some blocks of one-family well-kept homes. Regardless of the structures, overcrowding is endemic, and the streets teem with people. On side streets, the population density of the area is visible in the numerous young children at play, while on the main streets adults meet, hustle, hang out, and transact business. The life of the street is a prominent feature in the lives of the Academy students, and the shadow value system that infuses street life is evident in the Academy. The iron law of economic scarcity which haunts the street and its activities is also apparent as an overarching factor in shaping student behavior toward learning, jobs, and careers.

Unemployment is a stark fact of life, especially for black youths who have not graduated from high school. Academy students reflect this characteristic in that few held jobs, and many had been unemployed since leaving school. To be unemployed contributes to the problem of employability, as has been noted by studies of the idle. Correspondingly the Academy's experience in providing part-time jobs for students ran afoul of the many built-in personal problems of meeting job demands which plague the out-of- work. The marginal student parallels the marginal worker who, fearing failure and relegated to jobs that are of limited status, and even viewed with contempt by the general public; falls heir to a syndrome which contributes to lowered self-esteem and unemployment.

Liebow succinctly portrayed the relationship of low self-esteem and employment:

> Thus the man's low self-esteem generates a fear of being tested and prevents him from accepting a job with responsibilities or, once on a job from staying with it if responsibilities are thrust upon him, even if wages are commensurately higher...Lethargy, disinterest, and general apathy on the job, so often reported by employers, has its street corner counterpart. The men do not ordinarily talk about their jobs, or ask one another about them.[4]

These personality traits are prominent in the school, and present major motivational and instructional barriers among this segment of youth. The uniqueness of the Academy has been its ability to devise programs to directly address these problems.

A further not insignificant factor governing conduct in the community and in the public schools is the presence of organized gang activity. Especially among the males, gang activity is a force, requiring in a number of cases that the individual join for self-protection. The questionnaire data contains evidence that some students came to the Academy due to the activities of the gangs in the high schools, either in recruiting or in conflict. "No gangs," was a positive value of the Academy cited by a number of the students in their assessment of the strengths of the school.

CAM Academy's student body lives in the local area, and most pupils had attended one of the seven high schools on the West side of Chicago. Many of these students had known each other in their high schools, and it was not uncommon for them to come to CAM Academy through the invitation of a student they attended high school with.

The student body is overwhelmingly male in a ratio of about four or

five to one. This is understandable when one realizes that for central city schools it is not uncommon for Negro males to have an eighty percent dropout rate. The students range in age from 17-21 with a few students in their 30's. Police involvement and dependent children were two significant factors for males and females, particularly because they had a very strong bearing on school attendance and students remaining in CAM Academy for a period of time. Approximately 85% of the males had contact with police and courts, and 50% of the girls had illegitimate children.

Data were sought on the accomplishment of the objectives through the following channels: interviews with faculty, administrators, a sample of present students, former students now in college and analysis of student achievement and other school records. Briefly stated the purposes of the Academy are:

1. Basic skills in communication: regardless of what vocation a person chooses it is imperative that he be able to communicate with those around him. Our educational objective is that our students be able to listen, read, write, and speak with facility.
2. The formation of individual and collective identity: A person must have experiences that aid him in describing himself and appreciating "who he is."
3. An appreciation of the heritage of man and the varieties of human life regardless of what a person becomes, the greater his understanding of how other people live and have lived, the greater will be the options open to him for his own actions. This should increase his understanding of other people and enrich his cultural perspectives.

4. Skills in self-expression: The sense of mastery which a person achieves through participating in the creative arts not only encourages the development of a positive self image, but also provides him with the skills necessary to respond creatively to his environment.
5. An ability to solve problems: A person should be able to think analytically and critically, and provide creative and thoughtful solutions to problems that he might face, regardless of what those problems might be. [5]

These do not appear to be radically different from those objectives sought by most secondary schools. Where they do differ in this alternative school is in the means used and in the operationalizing of purposes. In the interest of brevity, this paper will summarize only a limited number of the basic findings of the report and draw a few of the implications.

The Significance of Voluntary Attendance

While there were a number of differences in curriculum design, one major operational curriculum design difference between CAM Academy and other secondary schools, is the use of voluntary student attendance. Attendance is completely voluntary, with no records kept on arrivals, departures, or daily attendance, other than signing into learning centers for purposes of recording a student's work progress. That this is a significant factor in the students' assessment of the Academy's attractiveness became clear in the students' interview data when the differences between the Academy and the previously attended secondary schools were discussed. The lack of attendance requirements was cited most frequently as one important major difference, and of greater significance,

the students equated this with freedom. "We are free at CAM" was one statement that seemed to sum up general student sentiments as they spoke about required attendance versus the voluntary attendance of the Academy.

Voluntary attendance does much to establish the unique climate of the school. Teachers are not battling truancy, striving for order to start classes on time, or handling the load of paperwork that required attendance entails. Moreover, the students viewed it as a mark of maturity to be given control over their time, and to be allowed to decide whether to come to the learning centers and to school. This investigator is persuaded that the voluntary attendance legitimizes, in the eyes of the students, the Academy as an institution devoted to helping them; one that is non-oppressive. Public schools, by contrast, are described routinely as repressive institutions. It is hypothesized that, for these students who do not have much control over their lives and who are governed by a heavy present-time orientation, the ability to decide whether one attends or does not attend school reigns as a major and valued area of determination in their life space. Due to the lack of records on attendance, a direct measure could not be taken, but from sample counts of students participating in the learning centers at the time of the evaluation the average daily attendance was 40 students with 70 to 80 attending on a fairly regular basis. It is estimated that attendance averages about 60-70% of the total enrollment on any given day. Attendance in this range does not differ significantly from inner city high schools where 50-70% of the student body is in attendance on a given day, with extended assistance from attendance departments.[6] It must also be noted that students who are enrolled at CAM Academy are very likely

those who would have had the poorest attendance records in the public high school.

The effects of the time horizon of students being recognized and respected in the organization of the Academy was checked in the interviews with the faculty. The faculty was in agreement that voluntary attendance was important to students, and contributed to the school climate being interpreted as non-repressive. As a consequence many of the other problems plaguing inner city schools: aggression, drugs, and student antagonism were absent. The faculty attributed much of the absenteeism of the students at the academy to a personal time horizon which is limited to the present, and not infrequently students were deterred from attendance by chance meeting of friends not in the Academy. Faced with other, more pleasurable, immediately satisfying activities, students would spend their time talking and engaging in social prusuits and miss classes for that day. From the student data it appears that time orientation and time use is governed by a time horizon that largely does not extend into planning for the future. Therefore, activities and friendships that offer present satisfaction take priority over a more distant, vague future that is only a promise.

When CAM students attend college they find that the time orientation accepted by the curriculum approach of the Academy is not recognized in the universities which operate with fixed time schedules and set classes. Subsequently, Academy students experience difficulty in adjusting to regular attendance of classes and the part-time jobs which most of them have to hold in order to attend college. Low class attendance was a major contributor to academic difficulty in the college sample. Students' resistance to fixed time schedules was also seen as a major contributor

to the failure of the part-time job program at CAM Academy which was tried and abondoned after a year. The issues of legitimacy in the students' eyes and the fixed time requirements of an academic world and the world of employment appear to be conflictual at this time.

From the data gathered, a summary was drawn of the instructional design as practiced at CAM Academy when it was evaluated in the spring of 1970.

Instructional Design Constructs

1. Individualization of instruction was a primary goal in the establishment of the instructional design. The learning centers which correspond roughly to classrooms, and voluntary student attendance allow for the individualization of instruction which is central to providing success experiences for students who come burdened with a sense of failure. A large variety of materials permits students to be self-pacing in their approach to instruction. Teachers are prevented from conducting total class instruction due to irregular attendance in the shifting student population; and are forced to use individualized approaches that provide for students to be self-pacing. The variety and range of instructional materials used and the way the learning centers are physically organized makes the individual, self-pacing approach possible. Moreover, students through self selection of subject matter engage material at their interest level, and also at the level of their instructional competency, thus circumventing a problem which is very common in the total group instruction where the middle of the class is the focus and both ends of the continuim are largely ignored. Using as a

central construct the individualization of instruction, the Academy does spend more money on materials per student than the average school.

2. Voluntary attendance by the student at the learning center plays an important part in the operation of the instructional design, the establishment of goals, and the mode of transaction that predominates. Through voluntary attendance students gain a feeling of control which is very important in their handling of their feelings of inadequacy and helplessness in the face of their history of past failure in classrooms. Where the student is able to select the learning center he wishes to attend and, within that context, the instructional materials he will use, he then enters the instructional ladder at a point where he feels some strength and competence. Faculty guidance comes through counseling with the student on the work he has produced, and assessment of the student's needs based on his work record. In looking at the attendance sheets at the learning centers, one sees that students do move among learning centers, although it is not unusual for them at their first enrollment to spend considerable time in one learning center.

3. Student choice of learning materials and the resultant self-pacing are important constructs in the instructional design for establishing the objectives for learning. The wide range of materials available and their appeal to several learning styles permit innumerable points of entry for student interest. There are close-ended materials programmed into small steps as well as completely open-ended unstructured materials with the

student developing both the type and range of response that is needed. In general, the very directed, close-ended materials are employed with students who are less sure and have more limited skills, while the open-ended materials are more attractive for students who have the fundamental skills, but need to develop more complex approaches to knowledge. Once having chosen his materials and begun work, the student moves along until he accumulates a record of performance which is used by the teacher to assess strengths and weaknesses and map out the individual's program of instruction. One of the strengths of the advising program is that it can relate direct assessment of what the student can do to the materials for his future learning. The advisement is not done inferentially from a limited sample of behavior drawn from test items that may or may not relate to specific future instructional needs.

4. The objectives and goals in the instructional design remain constant for the students, but the routes for accomplishing them are multiple. The primary aim is the development of sufficient proficiency in fundamental skills to pass the General Educational Development test. Students are able to follow many paths toward the objectives of the instructional program. This provides a considerable amount of flexibility for different learning styles, allowing teachers to tap the motivations of students. To become proficient in the fundamental skills of reading, mathematics, and writing, all students do not have to work on the same materials; different learning styles can assimilate

these processes through diverse approaches. Some need direct assistance, with a great deal of close attention paid to correction of errors in processes as they learn. Other students have developed some fundamental skills, and may need assistance only on a few selected aspects. Another group of students may need instruction to master these skills to a level where they are used automatically, and can bypass the initial basic instruction. Fixed objectives do give guidance to both the student and the teacher, and a range and depth of materials providing for many styles of learning contributes to flexibility. This intricate relationship which is generally recognized by educators as being important instructionally, is not generally developed to the high level that exists in the Academy.

5. The goals for instruction are specific and, as functioning within the instructional design, are reinforced by criterion measures that are external to the student-teacher relationship. Many of the students at the Academy are motivated by the recognition that certain desired goals are available, and there are direct routes to assist them in achieving these goals. The necessity to meet the GED requirement in order to qualify for a high school certificate gives a very real sense of direction to many of the specific instructional tasks in which students engage. Moreover, the necessity to show progress to stay enrolled establishes parameters of individual behavior and assists in maintaining task orientation. Many of the highly motivated students are persuaded of the necessity of a high school diploma

for employment opportunities, since most have experienced difficulty in obtaining jobs. The goals in the instructional design address this concern directly, and it is a construct that has high visibility for the students in the day to day work.

6. The modes of transaction (methodology) are more flexible and numerous than those customarily observed in high school classrooms. Individualization of instruction as a mode is practiced, but other approaches enter in: teaming, small group work, film, and lectures. Manageable class size permits teachers to be quite flexible in their modes of transaction in the learning centers. Ten to twenty students are generally in attendance in the learning centers unless a lecture is scheduled or outside people are appearing. Using a student-centric approach whereby the students are engaged in a variety of activities within the learning centers, the teacher moves around assisting students or handling small groups. Of considerable importance is the student-to-student instruction, whereby students introduce and encourage fellow students to try materials and read books. This is facilitated by the unstructured quality of the learning centers. As a mode of transaction, it seems particularly important as a motivating force for reluctant learners, stimulating them to interact with materials without many of the usual artificial motivational devices employed by teachers in regular classrooms. The range of methodology in use does not let the students wallow in failure. Due to the small class size, the

teachers know what students are doing, and can render immediate assistance when difficulty is encountered. Students in the learning gain a sense of accomplishment as the instructional methods are designed for them to make progress and failure is limited. Self-confidence and the skills to complete future tasks are established through this process.

7. The construct of evaluation in the instructional design of the Academy is an unusual one, and the evaluation process functions in a manner supportive of the main objectives of the Academy. First, there are no group tests given, or intergroup comparisons made among students. The evaluation process is essentially a judging of performance on specific tasks, the results being used to direct students toward the skills needed to pass the GED. Intermediate goals are defined by the designation of levels of subject matter accomplishment, but the levels seem to have but limited importance in the eyes of the students. In their judgement, passing of the GED is the primary concern. The evaluation monitoring process is carried through the maintenance of student records containing work samples. These work samples, particularly in the area of fundamental skills, represent direct tasks that are related to the external criterion measures of the GED. In the evaluation process, the work samples are evaluated for data which is used as feedback and guide to the students. The spectre of failure often associated with evaluation is removed as the students learn to value the feedback data from the teachers as assistance in planning their future instructional

program.

Of equal significance is the relationship that prevails between student and teacher under these conditions, for now they are joined in a mutual task of improving student performance to gain an external goal. The judgements rendered by the teacher in this evaluation process are to help the student in progress towards the goal, rather than to deny his competence as comparisons and emphasis on ranking of scores in evaluation, frequently do, especially for the lower achiever. This evaluation approach stands in sharp contrast to evaluation approaches generally followed in high school classrooms where comparisons made of students with their fellow students produce abstract scores that assume more importance than data on what is learned.

8. At first the Academy tried to use an instructional design predicated almost exclusively on programmed instruction. They soon found students were in great need of small group activity in order to develop any motivation for pursuing academic goals. Discussion in small groups within a secure environment became an important mode of transaction that permited both learning of problem solving processes and exploration in the testing of one's identity. Using this mode of transaction, and focusing on contemporary problems problem solving approaches that have been developed in subject matter disciplines are used. Moreover, practices within the sheltered environment of a small group permited encounters ordinarily too painful to be faced in life to be confronted in a manageable context and one's ability to cope with them tested. Language is clarified, thinking is tested, and priorities are

ordered through these small group experiences. The resu ts of this feature of the instructional design program also appear in gains in standardized test scores particularly in the use of language abilities.

The teacher and student relationship which prevails within the instructional design also plays a significant part in assisting students with the goals of identity and establishment of self-confidence. Students, through their relationships with staff, associate with role models who have been successful, and who are as individuals highly motivated to transmit their knowledge to the students. Through these experiences with desirable role models as teachers, through resource people and trips to outside areas, the student's life space is expanded and new career possibilities introduced. There is some evidence that the relationship with the teachers and the expanded field trips have been an important factor in encouraging CAM Academy students to enter colleges.

Instructional Design and Personal Failure

One of the major contributions of the Academy to the practice of education has been the evolution of an instructional design which brings into an interlocking, mutually supporting, transactional relationship the learning of academic subject matter and the development of the individual's sense of personal competence. A fundamental assumption in personality theory is that the self image can be enhanced or denigrated by experience. The contribution of the school experience in general, and the role of instruction in personal development has been suggested by a number of educators. The Academy has accumulated á valuable catalogue of experience in designing a learning envoronment for students who have been negatively influenced by

cultural forces due to color prejudices, and who have been largely unsuccessful in schools. The experience of CAM shows that the negative personality defenses arising from these factors, although advanced, are not irreversible. The delineation of how these failures in instructional design are allied to personal development and of the Academy's contribution to building a successful instructional design for students is probably the single most important generalization to come from this study.

In the failure of the instructional design which is evident in many of our inner city schools, the learning process is stymied as students refuse to engage in transactions with the instructional materials. Believeing that they cannot learn, and desiring to forstall experiencing failure, students go to extreme lengths to avoid confronting failure situations: truancy, disruptive class behavior, and lethargy are the most common symptoms of the syndrome. A number of authors have documented the significance of success or failure in employment as a dominant factor in gaining a concept of identity from which one's sense of self flows and becomes central to shaping one's life style in all spheres of interpersonal relationships.[7] However, few seem to relate this to earlier school experiences, the first recognizable work experience in a child's life. Anyone who has noted the reaction of a small child starting school realizes that the child is aware that school is an organized routine which gives direction and purpose to life, one which demarcates a recognized stage of maturity and establishes self identity through the transactions of instruction. Viewed in this light, the individual's experience with instructional design becomes a formative experience shaping the later adjustment to employment and other interpersonal relationships. The failure of an instructional design in such a specific instance as the teaching of a specific arithmetic skill

can have dire consequences as seen in this passage recorded by Liebow in his study of black streetcorner men:

> I graduated from high school (Baltimore) but I don't know anything. I'm dumb. Most of the time I don't even say I graduated 'cause then somebody asks me a question and I can't answer it and they think I was lying about graduating. . . They graduated me but I don't know anything. I had lousy grades but I guess they wanted to get rid of me.
> I was at Margaret's house the other night and her little sister asked me to help her with her homework. She showed me some fractions and I knew right away I couldn't do them. I was ashamed so I told her I had to go to the bathroom. 8

The shaping of the self image is clearly evident, and springs from the individual's experience with the instructional design. In subsequent situations, his actions will fall into a pattern that serves to reconfirm his negative beliefs about his own worth. Thus, the early formative influence of an instructional design may be greater than the employment experience in later life and, in effect, establish the prevailing pattern for adult work experience. The closing-off of opportunity, the withdrawal from active confrontation of new experiences, the routinization of responses (I'm dumb, I'm incompetent) are learned defenses built by failure and humiliation when the child is found wanting in early instructional transactions. The symptoms described as defensive avoidance mechanisms in the classroom are directed to prevent engagement with psychically painful experience. In adults, they are elaborated and more subtle, and come to dominate the employment pattern, leading to: absenteeism, frustration-aggression resulting in abrupt termination of jobs, and avoidance of responsibility.

The Academy has addressed itself through its instructional design to many of these symptoms, already well advanced in many of the students.

Through attention to instructional organization features, skillful utilization of materials, application of forms of evaluation that reward instead of punish, and use of modes of transaction that lower isolating defenses, CAM Academy has pioneered approaches to surmounting many of the seemingly unresolvable problems that afflict the inner-city high school youth.

Academic Achievement at the Academy

On the specific variables measuring acedemic achievement, CAM Academy has shown considerable success. Significant gains in mathematics and language arts, and limited gains in reading, as measured by the standardized tests, are recorded. A comparison and pre and post test scores of the Test of Adult Basic Education was made to determine the achievement gains for the students. The gains in mathematics and language were over two years and the gain in reading was four months.

Achievement Gains for CAM Academy Students
(Five months average attendance)

READING	9.0	9.4	0.4
MATHEMATICS	8.3	10.6	2.3**
LANGUAGE	8.7	11.1	2.4**

**Significant at .01

For purposes of comparison, the reading achievement scores for the schools of the area were obtained. Most of the students had attended these public schools prior to enrolling in the CAM Academy. These data are reported in percentile scores and were transposed to the appropriate grade level score for comparison purposes. Of the three public high

schools which seventeen of the thirty-one in the sample had attended, the mean reading score for students in the eleventh grade is 8.3, the thirteenth percentile on national norms. The sample of students who took the achievement test on entering the CAM Academy, but did not continue in enrollment until the post test was given had a grade level score of 8.2 in reading or about the twelfth percentile. The students who continued in enrollment at the Academy had an entrance grade level score in reading of 9.0, or about the eighteenth percentile in the national norms for eleventh graders. Thus, the students who come to the Academy are at the mean or above for the local area high schools, but stand far below the mean of the national norms on standardized achievement tests were the fiftieth percentile would represent average achievement. In other words, these students rank in the lowest one-fifth nationally of all students in the eleventh grade.

Since the Chicago reading scores were reported for each district at the third, sixth, eighth, and high school level, the curve of achievement for students was plotted (see Figure 1). Since the Academy students stand only slightly above the mean score for local high schools on their pre test, it is probably safe to assume that this curve of achievement is a reasonably accurate depiction of their previous public school performance. In Figure 1 the mean reading scores for each grade level are plotted as percentages of normal progress as set by the national norms of the test. Normal progress (a third grade student doing third grade work, a sixth grade student doing sixth grade work) is defined as 100, and an underachiever is rated as a percentage of the figure. A student making average progress would be on a straigth line representing his achievement at the fifty percentile on the national norms. From the slope

of the line an interesting widening of the gap between grade level standing and achievement can be observed, with a leveling off at 75% of grade level achievement at eighth grade which remains almost constant up to eleventh grade. What is significant is the discontinuity of the trend of the achievement curve when the scores for the Academy students are plotted on the basis of the pre and post tests. Over a period of five months, the slope of this line is sharply reversed in mathematics and language skills.

On the reading scores, although visually it appears to be falling, the rate of achievement of four months gain in five months is superior to the slope of progress as evidenced in the Chicago students from eighth grade to eleventh (slope of $\frac{81.0}{121}$ -vs- $\frac{71.5}{121}$). The specific percentages for grade level achievement on the pre and post test scores are: reading, 82 to 80%; mathematics, 75 to 90%; and language, 79 to 95%. These slopes are seen in Figure 2.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the reversal of the regression of achievement and an extrapolation of the trend line. A previous line of progress was extrapolated from the public school test data. If the gradients of the achievement curves in language skills and mathematics could be maintained, the hiatus in achievement would soon be closed. Whether this is possible must remain in the realm of speculation. The Academy seems to be particularly successful in language and mathematics, in the former closing the disparity between the considerable capacity the students show for oral language and their exceedingly limited capacity for written language. There is still quite a serious gap in reading achievement and the gain is very slow, although some advancement is shown over previous achievement in this area. The seriousness of the lack of growth is heightened when one considers that low reading skills are a major contributor to academic failure in college.

The Academy and Size

The intimate relationship of student to teacher in the learning center appears to be a prominent factor in promoting student responsibility for conduct, and maintaining an environment that is free of many of the social problems that harass large high schools. When one examines the assumptions underlying large high schools: economic efficiency, subject specialization, and the offering of a breadth of subjects, these seem neither compelling nor sufficient justification for maintaining sizable institutions in the face of their seemingly insurmountable problems. Having large student populations where students remain strangers contributes to problems of security and social control. The persistence of the low record or achievement overpowers any argument that economic efficiency mandates large school plants. The needs of the students for proficiency in fundamental skills and citizenship behaviors rather than specialized subjects, should set the major curriculum focus. The data from the Academy's experience would hold that a small intimate environment where positive relationships can be established between students and technically skilled, humanistically committed teachers, is essential for this population of students. These are precisely the elements which are missing in the large inner-city high school. Our data leads us to conclude that few, if any, large, inner-city high schools should be built! A desireable pattern of organization would probably use smaller schools, like the Academy, with specialization for students provided at some larger common sites, or in on-the-job training.

In many inner-city high schools, it is difficult to make the case

that an educational program exists; phantom classes, chaos and disruption, low achievement, unavailability of teachers (even neglecting to examine the aspect of competence) and a high percentage of dropouts are prevalent characteristics.[9] Certainly new structures of organization need to be tried so that suitable education for a sizable segment of our population can be provided.

The learning center in a small school, with its individualization of instruction and curriculum allowing for continuous progress for each student is a contribution to instructional design that is notably lacking in most secondary schools. This organizational concept provides the structure necessary for open-ended instruction, as well as freedom for the student and teacher to develop an effective relationship. The functioning of these learning centers is heavily contingent upon having classes in a very flexible time arrangement. The learning center as the instructional unit for the Academy was arrived at through testing different ways to organize the instructional pattern and it apperas to be based on a defensible theory of learning and instruction. The question arises, though, whether it can be generalized to larger schools, i.e., to be incorporated into a large public school progra. If learning centers are established as central to an instructioanl design, students would have to work with advisors daily to plan their schedules, and also be allowed the option of moving from one center to another on their own volition. In a large school the problem of social control and security would largely preclude this type of arrangement. Certainly a different organization, organized around smaller units of students, would need to replace the large assemblage of students that is now the practice.

Academy Students in College

CAM Academy students find college a difficult adjustment both personally and academically. Academically they are thrown into a situation where competition is stiff, and their limited backgrounds in science, math, and foreign language are constraints on the programs they can pursue. As students who come from limited backgroudns, they have special needs for programming and academic assistance, if they are to succeed. Furthermore, although given generous stipends by colleges (particularly by those out-of-state) due to their financial straits and lack of family financial support, most of them must hold part time jobs in order to remain in college. The time horizons of these students, which has been discussed at length in the section on instructional design as an important determinant in organizing the Academy, comes into play as the students attempt to adjust to college life and part-time employment. Regular class attendance for them is a problem, and many of the students do not consistently report to their part-time jobs, which jeopardizes their continuing employment. The management of time as a resource, the maintainance of a fixed schedule, and the relinquishment of immediate interests for abstract goals are major problems for these students. It has been hypothesized that these problems of adjustment to the time schedules are symptoms of a lack of faith in a future which holds promise of a better life. Our data on the student responses on fate control measures would lend support to this hypothesis.

Yet despite the mixed record, some of the students are succeeding, and this all the more remarkable given the enormous odds with which they start. The Academy staff does find that the college experience, even for those who drop out, is a positive and formative one which enlarges the students perspective, and acquaintes him with a range of alternative value systems. In those colleges where a supportive pro-

gram run by sympathetic staff members was available, several of the CAM Academy students appear to be succeeding in obtaining a college education. There is need to implement similar support systems in the local colleges if the number of students from the population that the Academy draws from is to be increased.

Conclusions

Then, what are the alternatives which have been established through practice and experience in this model of an alternative to the public secondary school? It would seem that this academy has been able to organize a curriculum that meets the personality demands of a segment of students who are disaffected by the structure of the curriculum prevelant in the public secondary schools. As one analyzes the data on these students and what they and their staff see as the important aspects of the curriculum, one comes to a conclusion that the school is tapping some very basic personality needs which Phillip Slater summarizes as being denied in large part by the American culture in his book The Pursuit of Loneliness.[10] As you may recall Slater states that every individual: (1) has a desire for community and for feeling that he is part of a social entity that is contributing to him as an individual and that gives him security within a group; (2) that every person has a desire for engagement of life's problems within the context where these problems can be identified, isolated and examined without being more than just ego extension of other individuals in the setting; and (3) that there is a desire for independence and having other individuals share in your problems and accept responsibility for helping you in analyzing,solving them and being interested

in how one grapples successfully with these personal adjustments. The Academy in its devising a curriculum for inner-city youth has capitalized upon the factor of size and is functioning in a context where intimate relationships between students and faculty are possible. Further, due to their limited size of the student body, they have been able to organize a curriculum which does make demands on students but avoids much of the humiliation that individuals experience within the setting of a large impersonal time oriented structure. Moreover they have succeeded in establishing a regimen of learning whereby the student and faculty member are on the same side of the line in the academic race and are working against an external criteria, thus avoiding the faculty member acting as gatekeeper on the students' desires and circumventing the notorious grade grind.

In the Academy organization students'behavior which is a product of environmental learnings is accepted and used as grist for curriculum planning and though it may be antithetical to the immediate task of the school is accepted as rational. The Academy thus avoids placing itself in the position of becoming moralistic about student behavior and places the responsibility upon students for selecting what goals they wish to gain and orienting their behavior to achieveing these goals. If one's attendance is too slack the student sees his chances of passing the GED fade.

What is suggested then from this alternative school is a need for a rather drastic reorientation of public high schools at least for a large segment of our youth in the inner city. Having just finished this report in November at the time the recent survey of the "Profile of the Large City High School"[11] was issued by the National Association of Secondary

School Principals one could not help but contrast the data from this evaluation of an alternative school with the findings and suggested recommendations from the NASSP report. One is struck by how what I deem almost mythical solutions are superimposed over the descriptive data. Let us look briefly at three recommendations. The NASSP report suggests the moving towards educational parks in order to bring together a larger socio-economic mix of individuals. It would seen that all of our present experience has demonstrated that you cannot achieve these mixed schools either by bussing or school location no matter how you try to build schools or change school boundaries. Population moves more readily than school buildings can chase them. Furthermore that educational parks in bringing together tremendously large groups of adolescents are about as feasible for promotion of individual responsibility and community feeling as the high rise apratments in ghettos. Both are practically useless in meeting a design for quality education or quality living. Moreover bringing together extremely large groups of adolescents in a situation where they practically lose what little identity they have managed to gain produces unmanageable social control problems.

A second assumption in the report which seems to conflict rather directly with the data from this study concerns the overriding desire to develop integrated schools and an implicit assumption of the necessity of these schools for student achievement. Seemingly, the authors of the NASSP report would sacrifice almost everything to achieve integrated schools although their own evidence points out that these are the schools that have the highest level of conflict and the most internal disorder. It would seem from my data that it is much more appropriate to attack fundamental educational problems of students providing them with academic skills

and promoting a sense of identity and fidelity which allows them to gain the security they need to become upwardly mobile vocationally. The data, as far as providing integrated schools within the context of the inner city, is at best exceedingly pessimistic, and one wonders if the effort and money that is being devoted to an attempt to establish integrated schools might better be spent on attacking directly fundamental instructional problems of the students. In a recent study completed by my colleague, Herbert Walberg, on juvenile delinquents, he found one of the most significant identifying characteristics of serious delinquents was that the teacher went too fast in school. This is an example of an instructional problem that is crucial but unrelated to educational parks or integrated schools but which has great impact on the future of student behavior.

Thirdly, the NASSP report comes down hard again on the side of maintaining comprehensive schools and the virtues of this type of school organization. This seems to me to be again substituting a mythology lodge in a belief system that places worship of structure and abstraction over direct evidence. As has been noted before the arguments for large comprehensive city schools based upon a economy, diverse programs, or integration are largely unsupportable for a large segment of the student population in the inner city. There is need for very fundamental education provided within an environment that allows the student to have success experience with sympathetic adults and secure relationships with other students. There is also a paramount need to make provision within this environment for student determination and allowing an assumption of responsibility for personal choice and conduct. These needs are, I submit, unrelated to whether a school is comprehensive or not. Achievement data on the inner city schools would rather

suggest we should shrink our curriculum. Students' needs can better be met in this fundamental oriented curriculum, all else is secondary in importance.

Under the present circumstances as the suthors of the NASSP report one of the most striking aspects of the large city high schools is conflict between student and student and student and faculty. As our data on this alternative school documents, one of the factors which is notably absent is the need for acting out aggression against other individuals. It would therefore seem that there is a need to begin to rethink the issues of large high schools, fixed schedules, integrated schools, comprehensiveness, and even much of the elaborated curriculum that we have put together through an additive process over the many years. It would seem that the descriptive type surveys do not contribute to this critical reexamination process but simply provide the framework for the superimporition of ideas that serve as educational apologetics for the present standard of practice. If anything the study of this alternative school documents it is that we must question some of our most fundamental assumptions that have guided practices in secondary education in the large high schools especially in the inner city. Although I have not studied in extensive detail recently suburban high schools it would appear to me that the problems of the rising drug culture and adolescent rebellion might not be so far removed from those of the inner city high school and we may be able to generalize our findings from this alternative school to these contexts.

FOOTNOTES

1. Havighurst, R.J., Smith, Frank, and Wilder, David. Profile of a Large City High School. National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1970.

2. Eash, Maurice J. A Comprehensive Curriculum Evaluation of the Christian Action Ministry Academy - 1970. Mimeograph.

3. Flanagan, John C. Project Talent. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, Project Talent Office, 1964.

4. Liebow, Elliott, Talley's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men.

5. Wagner, Jan. CAM Academy Syllabus. October 22, 1968, Mimeograph, Unpaged.

6. Stein, Michael. "Truancy Overwhelms the Truant Officers Here." New York Times,Februrary 2, 1970, 1:3

7. Rainwater, Lee. "Work and the Identity in the Lower Classes." in Everett C. Hughes, Men and their Work. Glenco, Illinois: Free Press, 1958.

8. Liebow, op. cit., p. 55.

9. Stein, op. cit.

10. Slater, Phillip. The Pursuit of Loneliness

11. Havighurst, Smith and Wilder, op. cit.